

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A messaging method comprising:
receiving an indication of a call from a calling party to a called party;
answering the call at a premises of the called party;
prompting the calling party to leave a message;
saving at least a portion of the message as an audio file;
recognizing that the calling party left the message;
preparing an outgoing message in response to recognizing that the calling party
left the message;
attaching the audio file to the outgoing message;
addressing the outgoing message to a network node associated with a unified
messaging mailbox of the called party; and
initiating sending of the message and the audio file from the premises to the
network node.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
disconnecting from the call;
prompting a modem to dial a telephone number associated with an Internet
Service Provider;
recognizing that a connection exists with the Internet Service Provider; and
outputting information representing the outgoing message for delivery via the
connection.
3. The method of claim 2, further comprising outputting a username and
password to the Internet Service Provider to gain access to an account of the called party.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
maintaining a notification list including at least one calling party;
receiving identification information associated with the call and identifying the
calling party; and
determining that the calling party is the at least one calling party.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the call comprises a Voice over Internet
Protocol call.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the outgoing message has a format selected
from the group consisting of an electronic mail message format, a mobile alert format, an
IM format, an SMS format, an EMS format, and an MMS format.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising utilizing a modem device to send
the outgoing message, wherein the modem device is selected from the group consisting of
a cable modem, a dial-up modem, a wireless modem, a satellite modem, and an xDSL
modem.

8. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
determining that a data connection exists; and
utilizing the data connection to send the outgoing message.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the messages comprises a multi-modal
message having an audio component and a non-audio component.

10. The method of claim 1, further comprising converting the audio file into an
uuencoded text format.

11. A messaging system, comprising:

a housing component at least partially defining an enclosure;

a network interface operable to form at least a portion of a communication link between a remote node of a network and a component located within the enclosure;

a call awareness trigger communicatively coupled to the network interface and operable to recognize a signal indicating an incoming call from a calling party;

a call answering mechanism operable to answer the incoming call and to prompt the calling party to leave a message;

a memory operable to store an audio file representing the message;

a messaging engine operable to compose an outgoing message, to attach the audio file to the outgoing message, and to initiate communication of the outgoing message to a remote messaging server.

12. The system of claim 11, wherein the call awareness trigger, the call answering mechanism, the memory, and the messaging engine are located within the enclosure, further wherein the call awareness trigger recognizes a ring voltage signal.

13. The system of claim 11, further comprising a computer having a housing comprising the housing component.

14. The system of claim 11, further comprising:

a telephone station communicatively coupled to a jack associated with the housing component; and

a modem communicatively coupled to the network interface.

15. The system of claim 11, further comprising a processor located within the enclosure, the processor operable to execute instructions to effectuate the messaging engine.

16. The system of claim 11, further comprising:

a computer jack associated with the housing component, the computer jack operable to interconnect a computer with the component; and
a processor located within the enclosure.

17. The system of claim 16, further comprising a computer readable medium having computer-readable data to allow the computer to store a username and password in the memory, to indicate a messaging address for an intended recipient of the outgoing message, and to indicate an identifier for the remote messaging server.

18. The system of claim 16, wherein the computer jack comprises a universal serial bus port.

19. The system of claim 11, further comprising a broadband modem communicatively coupled to the network interface, the broadband modem operable to support an always-on connection to a broader network.

20. The system of claim 11, further comprising a Voice over Internet Protocol engine communicatively coupled to the network interface.

21. A method of facilitating unified messaging, comprising:
communicatively coupling a messaging device to a premises network
communicatively coupled to a wide-area communication network;
communicatively coupling a telephone station at the premises to the messaging device;
communicatively coupling a computer to the messaging device;
employing the messaging device to answer an incoming telephone call from a calling party, to play a pre-recorded message that prompts the calling party to leave a message, to record a voice message from the calling party, to compose an electronic mail message in response to the voice message, to attach an audio file representing the voice message to the electronic mail message, and to initiate sending of the electronic mail message via the wide-area communication network.

22. The method of claim 21, further comprising executing code directing the computer to store a username and password in a memory associated with the messaging device, to indicate a messaging address for an intended recipient of the electronic mail message, and to indicate an identifier for a remote messaging server communicatively coupled to the wide-area network.

23. The method of claim 21, further comprising:
determining that a data connection exists interconnecting the premises network and a node of the wide-area network; and
utilizing the data connection to send the electronic mail message.

24. The method of claim 21, further comprising:
disconnecting from the incoming telephone call;
prompting a modem to dial a telephone number associated with an Internet Service Provider;
recognizing that a connection exists with the Internet Service Provider; and
utilizing the connection to send the electronic mail message.

25. The method of claim 21, wherein the audio file has a format selected from the group consisting of a .WAV file, an MP3 file, a .MIDI file, and a .AU file.

26. The method of claim 21, further comprising addressing the electronic mail message to more than one intended recipient.

27. The method of claim 21, further comprising attaching a second file to the electronic mail message comprising non-audio information communicated by the calling party.

28. The method of claim 21, wherein the incoming telephone call comprises a Voice over Internet Protocol call.

29. A computer-readable medium having computer-readable data to answer an incoming telephone call from a calling party, to play a pre-recorded message that prompts the calling party to leave a message, to record a voice message from the calling party, to compose an electronic mail message in response to the voice message, to attach an audio file representing the voice message to the electronic mail message, and to initiate sending of the electronic mail message.